On the Street Where You Live

MAIN STREET

St. Paul had its Seven Corners, but Bemidji had its Four Corners at the intersection of Beltrami Ave. and Third Street. Third Street was commonly referred to as Main Street, and the dividing point between East Third and West Third was the intersection with Beltrami Avenue.

In the fall of 1895, word got around that a town was being planned for the southwest shore of the lake to the west of the Mississippi River. A number of people believed it. To house the people who headed to this area, J. F. Remore erected a hotel at the corner of Third and Beltrami Avenue. Just after this, the Carson brothers built a trading post across the street where Patterson’s clothing now stands. The intersection now had two stores but the building was only beginning. John White built his grocery store to the west across the street. Building slowed down during the winter of 1895-1896, but when spring arrived, the town burst forth with many new businesses.

The public dock and the Band Pavilion were located at the east end of Third Street long before the Armory was built (1921), the Paul Bunyan House was constructed (1934) and the Paul Bunyan statue was established on the lake front (1937). Early photos show many activities associated with the public dock and the band pavilion.

The M & I was incorporated on July 17, 1900. The purpose was to build a line of railroad north from Bemidji to some point on the Rainy River. Foley Brothers was asked to consider a contract to build an extension. The Foleys visited the area and recommended a route up the west side of the lake. In August 1900, they stated that the railroad company would hardly feel justified in breaking up and destroying the lake front through the village, although, when viewing the location of the depot, that would be the most desirable route. Securing the "right of way" would involve time, as Bemidji would protest vigorously; go into court and fight the issue to its bitter end. With these considerations, they recommended a route to the west of the village. They did not get the contract, but what would have become of Bemidji Avenue and Lake Boulevard if they had built the tracks along the lakeshore?

The railroad tracks of the M & I siding, however, came up along the lake shore as far as the alley between 2nd and 3rd Street to the Hamm Brewing Company Beer Depot and the Minneapolis Brewing Co. Beer Depot. When the tracks came out and the warehouses were removed, we began to have the lakefront that we are now familiar with.

The new arch to Downtown Bemidji spans Third Street between the Paul Bunyan Gift Shop and Morell’s Trading Post. In 1901, these two corners were occupied by the Svea Hotel on the south and the Reed Photography Studio on the north. Hans P. Thompson and his brother bought the corner property adjoining the Svea hotel for $1,800 in the spring of 1901 and built a two-story building for a hotel and saloon. The Blocker Brothers bought it and remodeled it in 1905, and it then became the property of Gennes & Layon.

When the photographer, R. W. Reed, decided to locate in Bemidji, he had his studio built on the corner of Bemidji Avenue and Third Street. The building was designed especially for a gallery and opened in April 1901.

That first block running east to west housed many early businesses. On the south side were the Thompson Hotel, the Svea Hotel, the Blue Valley Creamery, Bemidji Steam Laundry, the Lakeside Bakery, the Stechman Restaurant, and the Gilmour/Goodman Drugstore. On the north side was the Lakeshore Hotel, Hakkerup Studio, and McKee Furniture and Undertaking. All these buildings were destroyed by fire at various times.

But back to the Four Corners.

The Remore Hotel Corner. After a few years of the hotel business, the Remore family sold the Remore Hotel on June 18, 1898 to George McTaggart and Earl Geil for $3,000. In 1904, a crew of men raised the building to the proper street height. Being one of the oldest in the city, portions of it had sunk owing to the rotting of the sills. With the paving of the streets, the city passed an ordinance that required all buildings to be raised. The hotel flourished for the first few decades. By 1920, it had lost its allure and the Markham Hotel was the place to stay in Bemidji or to hold meetings. A listing for the Remore Hotel last appears in the 1922 directory. The Remore was then used as the realty office and taxi cab office of William McCuaig as well as for other small businesses like the Shining Parlor.

Welcome Arch, 3rd St. & Paul Bunyan Dr.

by Cecelia Wattles McKeig
The board of directors has been busy this summer with some of our annual summer events, Depot Day and many days at the Beltrami County Fair in the Doud Cabin. I want to thank Sue Bruns for her many hours of research for photos to put in our new Doud Cabin brochure. If you don’t know about Freeman and Betsy (Stokes-Fishbeck) Doud, then please stop in to pick up a brochure. The Doud cabin is 121 years old this year.

Thanks to former board member, Andy Mack for making ice cream for two days at the County Fair; Leo Soukup and Andy Mack for showing people how to make rope and Jim Aakhus, Charlene Sturk, Sue Bruns, Steve Caron and volunteer, Bill Underbakke for helping inside the cabin sharing information about the cabin and the Doud’s. The Depot has been busy all summer with many visitors from around the country and world. But there is a group of people who come every week throughout the year to volunteer at the Depot. We received many research requests and our volunteers do that research. The Board would like to sincerely thank each and every one of our volunteers. See their names listed in this newsletter. Without their help throughout the year we would not continue to provide the assistance to those seeking information and help doing research.

If you would like to volunteer, contact our Director, Gary Rozman at the Depot. Here is a list of what you can do to help: research on-line, search through our collection of books, photos, manuscripts, microfilm, write an article for the newsletter, do handy work at the Depot, maintenance, and/or provide help with genealogy.

I’d like to reiterate President Geisen’s sentiments about our outstanding volunteer corps. They are not just the most dedicated and knowledgeable people one could hope to encounter, but the friendliest as well. I could not have asked for a nicer group of people to learn from and work alongside. I also need to thank two seasonal staff members for spending their summer with us: Julia Dancker wowed visitors with her expertise and appreciation of Bemidji lore; I’m pleased she will continue to volunteer her time at the History Center. And, Lily Jewell returned for another stint as archivist extraordinaire; we wish her well as she continues her studies back east.

We were able to hire Julia and Lily because of the generosity and support of our members. Their presence ensured that hundreds of visitors received a proper welcome and informed, conscientious assistance with their historical research and questions. Please, help us provide the same enlightened, expert customer service next summer, and throughout the year. Our fall fundraiser represents a primary revenue source and this year we’re proud to host Clay Jenkinson, humanities scholar, author, social commentator and a student of the future of rural America as keynote speaker. Join us for this gala dinner event on October 5th at the Bemidji Eagles and help support the important mission of the Beltrami County Historical Society.

yours, Gary.

The mission of the Beltrami County Historical Society is to provide connections to county history through public archives, collections, interpretive exhibits, and programs that educate, invite dialogue, and inspire self-reflection.

**Volunteers**
- Judy Dvorak
- Cecelia Wattles McKeig
- Georgia Erdmann
- Julia Dancker
- Lois Jenkins
- Tonya Struecker

**Staff**
- Gary Rozman, Executive Director

**Board of Directors**
- Sharon Geisen, President
- Jim Aakhus, Vice President
- Sue Bruns, Secretary
- Steve Caron, Treasurer
- Chris Muller
- Leo Soukup
- Charlene Sturk
- Terry Holter
- Jim Thompson

**Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union**
- 1510 Bemidji Ave N
- Bemidji—312-9907

**Beltrami Electric Cooperative**
- 4111 Technology Dr NW
- Bemidji—444-2540

**Bemidji Bus Line**
- 1507 Naylor Dr SE
- Bemidji—751-5311

**Bemidji Veterinary Hospital**
- 3610 Comfort Dr NW
- Bemidji—751-2753

**From the Desk of the Director**
by Gary Rozman

**Lily Jewell, right**

**Photo by Julia Dancker**
Calendar of Events

**October 5th: Fall Fundraiser**
Theodore Roosevelt is coming to Bemidji! Plan to attend the Beltrami County Historical Society’s Gala Dinner Event to experience Roosevelt—the Roughrider—in the person of Clay Jenkinson. Theodore Roosevelt was one of the country’s most active and popular presidents. The term “Roughrider” was given to Roosevelt for his military service in 1898 with the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry during the Spanish-American War. Tickets are $60 and are available online, at the Great Northern Depot (130 Minnesota Avenue), the Chamber of Commerce, Bemidji City Hall, and at these Bemidji businesses: Morell’s Chippewa Trading Post, Iverson’s Corner Drug, the main branch of First National Bank, Lueken’s Village Foods and the Bemidji Woolen Mills. Many thanks to media sponsor Paul Bunyan Communications, and to J.J. Dockside Restaurant & Tavern, Country Inn & Suites, Bemidji Community Theatre, the Sanford Center and our other generous supporters for their help underwriting this event. **5:30 p.m., Bemidji Eagles.**

**November 11th: First City Poetry Reads**
A poetry event sponsored by Watermark Art Center, part of an ongoing series. Anthony Swann starts the afternoon at **4:00 p.m. at the Beltrami County History Center** with a reading on the theme of “our place in history.” Open mic opportunity for other area poets to follow. Poets should limit their readings to 3-5 minutes. The designated theme is optional. Open mic poets should call to secure their slot for reading time. Each reading may be adjusted depending on the number of poets signing up. For sign-ups and other information, contact: Marsh Muirhead at (218) 556-6313 or mgmuirhead@midco.net or Watermark Art Center at (218) 444-7570.

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**In memorium:** John Ashbery, titan of American poetry, passed on September 3rd at the age of 90. *Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror* was awarded three major American poetry awards: the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. The collection's title poem is considered to be one of the masterpieces of late 20th century American poetic literature. His ode to the Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge in Minneapolis concludes with the line “And then it got very cool.” An appropriate sentiment for autumn in northern Minnesota. May his memory be a blessing.

**November 15: Fur Trade in Minnesota Exhibit Opening**
Discover an 1800s-era international industry along the Great Lakes and in Minnesota. This traveling exhibit, rich with activities and objects, shows how plentiful fur bearers brought together native people, explorers, and international trade. At the Fur Post, see the goods from around the world that were traded for furs and crafts. See if you have the strength to be a Voyageur or skills to be a clerk. Try your hand at Ojibwe beadwork. Learn how furs were transformed into fashionable hats.

*For the latest calendar updates go to our website:* http://beltramihistory.org/events

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**Fur Trade in Minnesota**

*HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO, Minnesota played a key role in a trap business that stretched across five continents. Fur Trade in Minnesota introduces you to this global trade network’s places and people.*

*Don’t miss it—

**November 15, 2017 - January 28, 2018**

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**Bernick’s**
959 Industrial Park Dr SE
Bemidji—751-5752

**Bob Lowth Ford**
PO Box 726
Bemidji—751-3140

**Camp Thunderbird, Inc.**
49536 Thunderbird Dr.
Bemidji—751-5166

**Carpenter & Wangberg, P.A.**
201 7th St. NW
Bemidji—444-7564

**Cease Family Funeral Home**
2807 Irvine Ave NW
Bemidji—751-9700

**Chester Berg Toyota**
705 Paul Bunyan Dr NW
Bemidji—444-3040

**Cool Threads**
206 Third St NW
Bemidji—444-4552

**DEERWOOD BANK**
PO Box 1278
Bemidji—759-6919
As an aside, I have to note what happened in Kansas City in 1911. “Contending that shoe shining is a work morally unfit for women, the city officials refused to grant a license to a shoe shining parlor which advertised on a sign that ‘pretty girls will shine your shoes.’” In 1926, J. P. Harper leased the quarters formerly occupied by the Shining Parlor and installed a line of harness and shoe repair machinery and material. I have heard that the Remore building burned, but I have been unable to find an account of any fire which destroyed it. By 1928, the building was gone and the corner was occupied by the Bemidji Oil Company.

The Northern National Bank Corner. John W. White built his grocery store on the northwest corner in 1895 and put on an addition in the spring of 1896. He put up a new store building in 1899 to accommodate his increasing business. He sold the property to Roderick McLennan in March 1901 for $5,000, who sold the lots two months later for $6,500 to C. H. Miles. Charles Miles opened his new saloon on Dec 12, 1901. The cost of the Great Northern Saloon and the Golden Club was over $25,000. It was a very upscale saloon with elegant furniture and chandeliers, and was advertised as the finest in the northwest. Charley Miles also had the first automobile in Bemidji in 1905. It was a two-door Ford painted brilliant red. It was quite a car, but when one wanted to start it, the sand on Beltrami Avenue was so deep that the wheels spun, and it needed a push. The sand was full of fleas. Walter Brooks recalled, “We had most of the fleas on us before we got the car started.” Charles Miles was a nice appearing fellow, a very good dresser and courteous man. He had roulette machines, slot machines and poker tables, all wide open, and he couldn’t help but make money. Charlie Miles moved on to Hibbing and built another beautiful hotel, which only lasted a short while until it burned. When Mr. Miles moved on to other enterprises and the property was available, the Lumberman Bank moved in. They renamed the bank the Northern National Bank. Over the years the building aged and changed in appearance, until it was purchased by the Northwest Foundation, stripped of its exterior layers and brought back to its beautiful stone exterior.

The Dalton Hotel/Patterson Clothing Corner. The Carson brothers built a two-story building where they conducted the Carson’s Pioneer Store. The post office was also in this building. The Carson slogan was “We came FIRST and will stay to the LAST.” The property became the Dalton Hotel and Saloon but was destroyed twice by fire, once in 1915 and again in 1918. Jack Dalton then built a brick building, and the second floor of the Dalton building continued as the Dalton Hotel until 1964 when all the beds and furniture were sold. The first floor was fitted out for George T. Baker’s jewelry and music store with large plate glass display windows. Patterson’s Clothing eventually moved into the first floor of the building and continued for decades.

The Barbershop Corner. Although I cannot find documentation to prove it, I think this corner had a hotel owned by the Carsons in the early years called the Bemidji House, but the corner was occupied from 1903 on by the Commercial Barber Shop operated by Leonard Crothers. Crothers came to Bemidji in 1903. He operated barber shops in Bemidji until his death in 1945 when he suffered a heart attack in front of the Security Barber Shop. His wife died in 1945 in the fire which destroyed the Municipal Liquors Dispensary No. 1, being trapped in her apartment by the flames. His first wife Lucille died in Bemidji in 1911. The corner later became the site of a Standard Oil filling station.
Safety glasses were in short supply so some astronomy buffs watched the old-fashioned way, with home-made cereal box viewers, during the Great American Eclipse.

Photography by Trish did a fantastic job with our train-themed photo station during Depot Day! We hope to offer another picture-perfect backdrop for souvenir snapshots over the winter holidays!

The Honorable Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota donated a flag flown above the United States Capitol in honor of Beltrami County personnel who perished in World War 1. Many thanks to Andy Mack for constructing the pole and base.

Antique cars were on display in full force during the annual Independence Day Parade in Debs, Minnesota. We’re planning to march next July; this year, we stayed close to home and had a great time showing off our restored baggage cart in Bemidji’s Water Carnival Parade.

Visitors to the Beltrami County Fair were able to take part in a number of different activities, from historical scavenger hunts to ice cream making, and even a blacksmithing demonstration. The Doud Cabin featured plenty of pioneer-era artifacts, including the vintage postcard, above.
My mother's father, Olaus Rorem, was raised on a farm on an island near Stavanger, Norway. Since he was the third son, he knew he wasn't going to get any of the farm. When Olaus was 15 he rowed a boat to Stavanger; he hired onto a ship going to New York. Not knowing English, and having no money, he walked to Wisconsin where his brother was located.

Not finding much opportunity there, he walked to central Iowa, looking for ideas for a business. In the small town of Radcliffe, Iowa, he thought they could use a chicken and egg business. It was very successful, and 3 of his sons also worked in the business at a later time. He married Anna Sevold, and they had nine children. They had the biggest house in town.

He lived a very successful life until the depression. He went bankrupt and died of cancer shortly thereafter. During the Depression some people would come to the business and ask if they had any "leakers" (cracked eggs). His sons then had to find a different way to make a living. He was a very generous man and gave away more than just "leakers." His daughters had college educations. One son died of flu in World War I. One daughter died of diphtheria.

Since Olaus was from the west coast of Norway he was quite dark complected as opposed to the inland Norwegians. He was descended from the Vikings, who were always capturing maidens from the Mediterranean area. This gave the Viking descendants rather dark skin and hair. Hence the origin of the term "black Norwegians." My mother looked Spanish even though she was 100% Norwegian.

My father's father, John Thompson, was born in the United States. His parents emigrated from Norway to the U. S. His family had settled in central Wisconsin. Young John wanted to do his own thing. He acquired a cow, and he and his cow walked to north central Iowa near the town of Lake Mills. He was a very good farmer and businessman and accumulated over 500 acres of rich Iowa soil. He married Sara Tharaldson, and they had 12 kids.

When he retired he gave 80 acres to any of his offspring who wanted to farm. This also included his daughters’ husbands.

My dad, Carl, was the youngest of the 12 and didn't like farming. He hated cultivating corn all summer with the horses. He really didn't like doing all the milking when everyone else was harvesting. He wanted an education. In the 1920's there wasn't much money in farming for college expenses. Two of his sisters were teaching country school and provided him with enough money to get started in college. All of his siblings ended up farming.

Editor's note: Dr. Jim Thompson has lived in Bemidji since 1937. He's a retired physician and recently joined the Beltrami County Historical Society’s Board of Directors. He also serves on the City of Bemidji Heritage Preservation Committee.

JOIN THE BOARD!
Applications now Accepted.

The BCHS Board of Directors provides overall management and policy direction. A board member may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms.

Please contact us for an application.

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<th>Sanford Health</th>
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<td>1300 Anne St NW</td>
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You’re Invited

Happy anniversary to the Bemidji Community Theatre! *Two on the Aisle, Three in a Van,* which premiered in September, was their 100th production! Their home, the historic Chief Theatre, celebrates its 80th birthday this year. Congratulations to both on reaching these milestones, and an extra special ‘thank you’ to BCT for their generous donation to the Beltrami County Historical Society fall fundraiser raffle.

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### Fall Fundraiser Gala Dinner

*Thursday, October 5th 2017*

**Eagles Aerie #351, 1270 Neilson Avenue SE**

**Social Hour:** 5:30 p.m.  
**Dinner:** 6:00 p.m.  
**Performance:** 7:30 p.m.

**Tickets:** $60

Includes choice of:

- Chicken Kiev  
- Jumbo Shrimp  
- Vegetarian Lasagna.

Twenty dollars of the ticket price is tax deductible. Proceeds support historical scholarship, preservation, and education.

Call (218) 444-3376 or visit [http://beltramihistory.org/event/annual-fall-fundraiser/](http://beltramihistory.org/event/annual-fall-fundraiser/)

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*Clay Jenkinson as Theodore Roosevelt, The “Rough Rider”*
Beltrami County Historical Society
PO Box 1190
Bemidji, MN 56619

Annual Membership Benefits:

- Free museum admission
- 3 hours of free assisted research
- 10% gift shop discount
- Voting privileges
- One-year subscription to the BCHS quarterly newsletter *The Depot Express*
- Perks at 300+ historic sites in the United States through the Time Travelers Network (timetravelers.mohistory.org).

Annual Beltrami County Historical Society Membership

Name _________________________________
Address __________________________________
City ___________________ State ____ Zip _____

☐ Charge my credit card or make check payable to:
BCHS, 130 Minnesota Ave, Bemidji, MN 56601
Card #____________________ Exp. Date____ Sec. Code___
Signature______________________________

Membership Levels
☐ Individual $25
☐ Family $45
☐ Sponsor $75
☐ Benefactor $100
☐ Patron $200
☐ Supporter $500

Thank you for supporting the Beltrami County Historical Society!

Your memberships and tax-deductible donations preserve collections of manuscripts, textiles, maps, photographs, and artifacts.

*BCHS is a 501(c)(3) organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Federal EIN: 41-1484638 / State of Minnesota Tax ID: 6530934*